

Fountainhead Museum to Exhibit Alaska's First Car

Old Cars Weekly, by Nancy DeWitt Historian

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The Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum, which opened in 2009 in Fairbanks, Alaska, has quickly become a must-see attraction in the Land of the Midnight Sun. The museum now has over 70 prewar cars in its collection, including rare gems like an 1899 Hertel, 1906 Compound, 1920 Argonne and 1921 Heine-Velox. The museum also houses an impressive display of nearly 50 vintage outfits, plus historic Alaska photos and videos that illustrate the unique challenges faced by the state's first motorists.

On May 17 the museum will unveil its newest exhibit featuring Alaska's first and most famous car. The 1905 Sheldon runabout was built in Skagway by 20 year-old Bobby Sheldon in an attempt to woo a young lady. Sheldon had never seen an auto before except in pictures, yet he managed to assemble a functional car using buggy wheels, bar stools and a two-cycle marine engine. This valuable artifact is on loan from the University of Alaska Museum of the North.

From June 18-20, the Fountainhead Museum will host the inaugural Midnight Sun Cruise-In at Wedgewood Resort in Fairbanks. The weekend will be jam-packed with events, including a dinner cruise, car show, museum activities, the 'Tour de Fairbanks' cruise, and awards dinner. Fairbanks' Vernon L. Nash Antique Car Club is partnering with the museum to organize the car show and tours, and the Anchorage Model A Club will be out in full force. Dennis Gage of "My Classic Car" will also be on hand to film an episode for his television show. The Bear Lodge is offering discounted hotel rooms during the Cruise-In, which is scheduled to coincide with a number of other solstice events in Fairbanks.

The Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum is located at Wedgewood Resort, just minutes from downtown Fairbanks. An on-site hotel and suites, seasonal restaurant, meeting facilities, banquet services, and adjacent wildlife sanctuary make this new museum a perfect destination for anyone venturing to the Last Frontier. For more information, visit <http://www.fountainheadhotels.com>, call 907-450-2100 or e-mail museum@fdifairbanks.com.

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